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a game or on top of a game. For example, a gaming machine could display paylines on a proximate display screen and also display a reel game on a distal display screen, and the paylines could fade in and fade out periodically.

[0129] A gaming machine includes one or more processors and memory that cooperate to output games and gaming interaction functions from stored memory. FIG. 9 illustrates a control configuration for use in a gaming machine in accordance with another specific embodiment.

[0130] Processor 332 is a microprocessor or microcontroller-based platform that is capable of causing a display system 18 to output video graphics such as symbols, cards, images of people, characters, places, and objects which function in the gaming device. Processor 332 may include a commercially available microprocessor provided by a variety of vendors known to those of skill in the art. Gaming machine 10 may also include one or more application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs) or other hardwired devices. Furthermore, although the processor 332 and memory device 334 reside on each gaming machine, it is possible to provide some or all of their functions at a central location such as a network server for communication to a playing station such as over a local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), Internet connection, microwave link, and the like.

[0131] Memory 334 may include one or more memory modules, flash memory or another type of conventional memory that stores executable programs that are used by the processing system to control components in a layered display system and to perform steps and methods as described herein. Memory 334 can include any suitable software and/or hardware structure for storing data, including a tape, CD-ROM, floppy disk, hard disk or any other optical or magnetic storage media. Memory 334 may also include a) random access memory (RAM) 340 for storing event data or other data generated or used during a particular game and b) read only memory (ROM) 342 for storing program code that controls functions on the gaming machine such as playing a game.

[0132] A player uses one or more input devices 338, such as a pull arm, play button, bet button or cash out button to input signals into the gaming machine. One or more of these functions could also be employed on a touchscreen. In such embodiments, the gaming machine includes a touch screen controller 16a that communicates with a video controller 346 or processor 332. A player can input signals into the gaming machine by touching the appropriate locations on the touchscreen.

[0133] Processor 332 communicates with and/or controls other elements of gaming machine 10. For example, this includes providing audio data to sound card 336, which then provides audio signals to speakers 330 for audio output. Any commercially available sound card and speakers are suitable for use with gaming machine 10. Processor 332 is also connected to a currency acceptor 326 such as the coin slot or bill acceptor. Processor 332 can operate instructions that require a player to deposit a certain amount of money in order to start the game.

[0134] Although the processing system shown in FIG. 9 is one specific processing system, it is by no means the only processing system architecture on which embodiments described herein can be implemented. Regardless of the processing system configuration, it may employ one or more memories or memory modules configured to store program instructions for gaming machine network operations and operations associated with layered display systems described

herein. Such memory or memories may also be configured to store player interactions, player interaction information, and other instructions related to steps described herein, instructions for one or more games played on the gaming machine, etc.

[0135] Because such information and program instructions may be employed to implement the systems/methods described herein, the present invention relates to machine-readable media that include program instructions, state information, etc. for performing various operations described herein. Examples of machine-readable media include, but are not limited to, magnetic media such as hard disks, floppy disks, and magnetic tape; optical media such as CD-ROM disks; magneto-optical media such as floptical disks; and hardware devices that are specially configured to store and perform program instructions, such as read-only memory devices (ROM) and random access memory (RAM). The invention may also be embodied in a carrier wave traveling over an appropriate medium such as airwaves, optical lines, electric lines, etc. Examples of program instructions include both machine code, such as produced by a compiler, and files containing higher-level code that may be executed by the computer using an interpreter.

[0136] The processing system may offer any type of primary game, bonus round game or other game. In one embodiment, a gaming machine permits a player to play two or more games on two or more display screens at the same time or at different times. For example, a player can play two related games on two of the display screens simultaneously. In another example, once a player deposits currency to initiate the gaming device, the gaming machine allows a person to choose from one or more games to play on different display screens. In yet another example, the gaming device can include a multi-level bonus scheme that allows a player to advance to different bonus rounds that are displayed and played on different display screens.

[0137] Typically, using a master gaming controller, the gaming machine controls various combinations of devices that allow a player to play a game on the gaming machine and also encourage game play on the gaming machine. For example, a game played on a gaming machine usually requires a player to input money or indicia of credit into the gaming machine, indicate a wager amount, and initiate a game play. These steps require the gaming machine to control input devices, including bill validators and coin acceptors, to accept money into the gaming machine and recognize user inputs from devices, including touch screens and button pads, to determine the wager amount and initiate game play.

[0138] FIG. 10 shows a method 300 of providing a game of chance on a gaming machine in accordance with one embodiment. Method 300 will be described with respect to gaming machine 10 of FIGS. 8A and 8B.

[0139] Method 300 begins with receiving input from a person to begin game play (302). Often, a person inserts cash or credit through the coin acceptor 28 or bill validator 30. Bill validator may also accept a printed ticket voucher, which may be accepted by the bill validator 30 as indicia of credit. Once the gaming machine has accepted cash or credit, game play may commence on the gaming machine. Typically, a player may use all or part of the cash entered or credit into the gaming machine to make a wager on game play. During the course of a game, a player may be required to make a number of decisions that affect the outcome of the game. For example, a player may vary his or her wager, select a prize, or make